

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

The *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society* is focused on furthering research on the understudied subfield of Muslim philanthropy and civil society. As we have described in our inaugural issue, the *Journal* takes a broader view of philanthropy, beyond the traditional definition of “voluntary action for the public good.”

Scholars embarking upon a research agenda for a subject such as Muslim philanthropy and civil society face major challenges. They include the scarcity of data, the need for literature, and important research questions. This issue seeks to provide some direction for the latter two challenges: literature and research questions.

Jonathan Benthall examines the growing practice of supporting orphans as an important aspect of Muslim philanthropy. Orphan care has long been an important priority for Islamic charity. As Benthall shares, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself was an orphan; and there has been an increased emphasis of orphan care in humanitarian organizations. Benthall examines the research and programs in this area and makes a recommendation for a scholarly conversation. This scholarly conversation, however, goes further than orphan care and provides an important framework to examine other important areas of Muslim philanthropic practice.

This issue also includes five reviews of important books that reflect the broad landscape of this subfield. These reviews collectively examine three broad categories: education, Muslim nonprofit institutions, and the intersection of Muslim civil society and Muslim philanthropy.

Education has long been considered an important beneficiary of Muslim philanthropy. The first endowments (*awqaf*) were focused on furthering education. In both Muslim majority and minority countries, education remains one of the largest beneficiaries of Muslim philanthropy. This issue highlights a book on madrasas (Islamic seminaries) and the role of philanthropy in education policy.

Muslim nonprofit institutions like the mosque, Islamic schools, and other convening organizations have become important vessels of Muslim philanthropic activity. This issue reviews books that examine the role of a Chicago-based Muslim nonprofit institution and a Canadian mosque.

Finally, across the world Muslims find themselves in the midst of crisis, conflict and external scrutiny. Does this environment have an impact on how Muslim philanthropy and civil society are developing? This is the focus of one of the book reviews.

Collectively, this issue seeks to further research in Muslim philanthropy and civil society through an important exploration of research questions as well as highlighting important published works.

Sincerely,
Scott C. Alexander, PhD and Shariq A. Siddiqui, PhD, Co-Editors-in
Chief